Surára
Pakidái

/72 cont./

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333. (cont.)
p. 70). Among the Piaroa Indians very weak old people are walled up alive in a cave. They are given food and drink for several more days and, when this has been used up, die of enervation (Marquis de Wavrin, 1944, pp. 197/98).

members destined for death are thus dispatched into the other world in an altogether humane manner, and even the killing itself is dictated by humane impulses. Since these old and sick persons can, of course, no longer take part in the customary seminomadic way of life, they would be obliged to remain helplessly behind when the tribe sets out on a new migration. This is to be prevented, however, /73/ and at the same time it is desired that the way to the moon, the paradise of the dead, be opened for them. After their death, they are cremated in the same way as all other deceased persons, that is to say, in the case of old people only the head is burned, and their ashes, too, are preserved and drunk at the festival in memory of the dead.

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775 Greater than the fear of death among all Surára and Pakidái is the thought that they might one day die without being cremated, for example, during military actions, for then the entrance into the moon is barred for their soul (see p. 198).

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[784]

Persons who commit incest are excluded from cremation after their demise, and they are not mourned, for incest is regarded as the greatest crime. Poré (see p. 197) does not want their souls on the moon, and partaking of their bone ashes would exert unfavorable influences on the male members of the tribe. They are therefore tied up in a squatting position and buried in a hole in the ground.

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If children die before the completion of the third year of life, they are thrown into the river without any ceremony, since they belong to the flesh and blood of the mother and do not yet have their own soul (see p. 138).

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Guaharibo

123 From the second day onwards their audacity began to become a nuisance. Pots, pans, empty boxes, string, knives and, of course, machetes, constantly excited their greed and began to disappear, to be concealed among the rocks at the foot of the hills. From then on we had to keep our stores, bags and dixies under lock and key. During the daytime they roamed about the camp, driven by curiosity to see so much that was new, but with the night they would again herd together round their [152] fires at the water's edge. They were very jealous of their women-folk and paid them the most touching attention. One [758] of the women was frequently shaken by violent fits of coughing and each time her mate would bring her a gourd of water he had drawn from the river and support her while she drank. When the coughing started again, the poor man's face would take on an expression of powerless solicitude.

595 As far as I could discover the Guaharibos are monogamous 162 and their women are definitely in the minority—as evidenced by the present group of nine men and two women. When, by 578 means of signs and gestures, we asked the unattached males 684 whether they had no wives, the answer was in each case in the negative. Cardona told us that the most common cause of 838 quarrels among them is raping of the women. We thought that homosexuality was also probably common practice. We 201 had no actual proof of this, but saw many instances of ges- 123 tures—usually among themselves, but occasionally directed at us—which were, to say the least, equivocal. To the Guaharibos such gestures were obviously natural and proper behaviour.

123 In order to watch their reactions we fired a few rounds of 411 ammunition. Accustomed to the silence of the forest and trained to hear the least rustle of sound, they betrayed instant terror. Clapping their hands over their ears, they fled. We invited them to demonstrate their own weapons. They handled their powerful bows with astonishing ease and accuracy and could send their light arrows, five to six feet long and made of straight reed stems, nearly a hundred yards. With a termite hill some eighteen inches high and twelve inches across as target, they hit it consistently from fifty yards. Shooting

appropriately adjusted, he had no difficulty marrying the remaining two.

The close ties between siblings of the opposite sex and between brothers-in-law are also reflected in the fact that incestuous relationships are not severely punished. Thus, Kąobäwä was known to be having an affair with his classificatory sister, Krämi, but her husband overlooked the matter. Incest is not severely punished. The Yąnomamö rely on the internal sanctions of shame and conscience, bolstered supernaturally by the fear that incestuous affairs prevent the release of the soul of the guilty party during cremation. As a counter measure, they dismember the body of someone known to have committed incest during his life time, and burn the parts of the body a much longer time than they normally would have otherwise. Some of the Yąnomamö avoid incestuous affairs, according to Kąobawä, because one of their ancestors turned into a sloth (ihama) after having committed incest. Kąobawä himself initially denied having incestuous affairs because incest (yaweremou), as he put it, ". . . is the most despicable thing possible." Later, he confided that he had fornicated with his FaBrDa on a number of occasions and did not seem particularly concerned about the matter, except his fear that I would tell his wife. Other data suggest that incest, far from being feared, is widely practiced. In particular, kinship usage varies considerably from the expected usage predictable from genealogical data and the Iroquois terminology. Whenever I

avoid the raids from the Patanowë-tedi, the man in question used this opportunity to have an affair with Konoreiwë's wife, presuming that he would not be discovered because the village was filled with people. He was discovered, despite his discretion, and challenged to a duel by Konoreiwë. The entire village participated in the club fight. Konoreiwë punished his wife by hitting her in the mouth with a glowing fire brand, severely burning her lips.

Finally, and most drastically, the woman shortage is remedied by raiding other villages to abduct women. This, however, is war. The ever-present possibility of this occurring, however, is a constant threat to the stability of political alliances, for allies occasionally turn on each other with the intent of seizing females. It is largely for this reason that allies cede women to each other peacefully by contracting marriage alliances. In November 1964 the Patanowë-tedi arrived at Bisaasi-tedi to participate in a feast. This was the first time the groups had gathered as groups since they separated from each other on hostile terms in ca. 1944. They intended to make peace at this feast, but a party of men from Monou-tedi, a village that also formed part of the group before the 1944 split, arrived uninvited and abducted seven women from the Patanowë-tedi. This ultimately provoked a war between the Patanowë-tedi and Monou-tedi, and determined the settlement pattern of both groups, as well as their political activities, all during my field work. The war was still being actively prosecuted when I

1. Marriage Ties

602 593 581 583 [609] Marriages bind the groups of the spouses to each other in a system of exchanges involving goods, services, and the promise to reciprocate women at a later date. Yąnomamö marriage is peculiar in that the ties between husband and wife are very weak, but that ties between a man and his sister's husband are strong. The significance of marriage as an institution that initiates (or continues) alliances between non-agnatic groups stems, therefore, from the nature of the ties that it creates between the male members of the allied groups.

593 Ties between spouses are usually very tenuous, due largely to the fact that men are constantly suspicious of their wives' motives whenever the women leave the village unescorted. Men always suspect their wives of infidelity, and will even beat them if there is the slightest suspicion that the women have been seeing other men. A certain amount of 839 593 trysting goes on in all villages, but it is more frequent and more easily accomplished in larger villages. Discovery of [578] liaisons by the cuckold inevitably leads to club fighting between the factions of the lover and the husband. The woman 593 684 involved usually suffers more than either of the male principals in the fighting that follows, as women are severely punished by their husbands. The punishment usually consists of a beating with a club, but men frequently shoot their unfaithful wives with barbed arrows in a non-vital area of the body, such as the buttocks or leg. In one instance I witnessed,

593 the enraged husband struck his wife in the face with a burn-
• 684 ing log, severely burning her mouth. Burning is a common punishment, and many women bear immense scars from wounds inflicted by enraged husbands. Just before I left the field
[578] a fight developed in Patanowä-tedi between a man and his wife's lover. The lover was killed in the fight and the woman's husband punished her by cutting off her ears with a
[165] machete. Some women have been killed by enraged husbands, but in most of these cases, the deaths resulted from wounds that were not intended to be fatal.

607 Despite the fact that the tie between spouses is
613 weak, marriages create strong ties between a man and his
*621 sister's husband. This tie is of great significance in the
*628 social organization of the Yąnomamö, as it is stable, well
[593] defined, non-ambiguous and politically important. The brother-in-law (shoriwä) tie is the key link in alliances between local descent groups, both within and between villages.

607 The term shoriwä (brother-in-law, MoBrSo, FaSiSo,
601 friend) is used constantly by Yąnomamö men when they address any new male acquaintance. Shoriwä implies a set of obligations and duties between the speakers. One can depend on his shoriwä for material goods and gifts, and a request for such items from a shoriwä is not easily denied; shoriwä is, in addition to goods-giver, wife-giver. The Yąnomamö use this
[197] term for foreigners as well; they use it so frequently that
[609] the Salesian Missionaries who have recently contacted a few
[101]

*621 595 581 578 [593] Moiyoawë had two wives, Borehima and her older sister, Kumaiema. Borehima thought she was being treated badly by her husband and deserted him, taking refuge with another man, Makerawë. Moiyoawë attempted to get his wife back from Makerawë, precipitating a club fight between two factions of the village. During the club fight, Makerawë stabbed Moiyoawë with the sharp end of his club, wounding him badly. This enraged the leader of Moiyoawë's faction, Rakoiwë, who then attacked Makerawë, running him through with a sharpened club, killing him. Makerawë's faction fled from Patanowë-tedi and joined their relatives in Monou-tedi, knowing that the latter would welcome their assistance in future raids against the Patanowë-tedi. The Monou-tedi, assisted by the Patanowë-tedi refugees, raided the Patanowë-tedi two times shortly after the refugees joined them. On the second raid they caught two Patanowë-tedi men hunting outside the village. They killed one of them, but let the second one go, as he was Kɵabëwë's actual son by a previous marriage and they did not want to risk a war with the Bisaasi-tedi by killing this man, Shinahewë. In a recent letter from James P. Barker, I learned that a part of the refugee faction joined Bisaasi-tedi.

*[628] [361] 726 *625 [602] [115]

The woman over whom the internal feud started was taken away from Makerawë's group. Moiyoawë cut both her ears off to punish her.

[593] [684]

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

fidelity. Many men, however, show their ferocity by meting out serious punishment to their wives for even minor offenses. It is not uncommon for a man to injure his errant wife seriously; and some men have even killed wives.

Women expect this kind of treatment and many of them measure their husband's concern in terms of the frequency of minor beatings they sustain. I overheard two young women discussing each other's scalp scars. One of them commented that the other's husband must really care for her since he has beaten her on the head so frequently!

A woman usually depends for protection on her brothers, who will defend her against a cruel husband. If a man is too brutal to a wife, her brothers may take the woman away from him and give her to another man. It is largely for this reason that women abhor the possibility of being married off to men in distant villages; they know that their brothers cannot protect them under these circumstances. Women who have married a male cross-cousin have an easier life, for they are related to their husbands by cognatic ties of kinship as well as by marriage. Kąobawä, for example, is related to Bahimi as FaSiSo, and their marital relationship is very tranquil by Yąnomamö standards. He does beat Bahimi on occasion, but never cruelly. It is considered good to beat a wife every once in a while just to show your concern for her.

A young man in Monou-teri shot and killed his wife a few years before I conducted my fieldwork. Even while I was there, a man in one of the villages shot his wife in the stomach with a barbed arrow. Considerable internal injury resulted when the arrow was removed. The missionaries had her sent out by airplane to the Territorial capital for surgery. Her wound had gotten infected, and the girl was near death by the time the incident came to their attention. Another man chopped his wife on the arm with a machete; the missionaries in that village feared that the woman would lose the use of her hand because some of the tendons to her fingers were severed. A fight involving a case of infidelity took place in one of the villages just before I left the field. The male culprit was killed in the club fight, and the recalcitrant wife had both her ears cut off by her enraged husband. A number of other women had their ears badly mutilated by angry husbands. The women wear sticks of cane in their pierced ear lobes; these are easily grabbed by the husband. A few men jerked these so hard that they tore their wives' ear lobes open.

It is not difficult to understand, then, why Yąnomamö women in general have such a vindictive and caustic attitude toward the external world. By the time a woman is thirty years old she has "lost her shape" and has developed a rather unpleasant disposition. Women tend to seek refuge and consolation in each other's company, sharing their misery with their peers.

A woman gains a measure of respect when she becomes old. By then she has adult children who care for her and treat her kindly. Old women also have a unique position in the world of intervillage warfare and politics. They are immune from the incursions of raiders and can go from one village to another with complete disregard for personal danger. In this connection they are employed as messengers and, on some occasions, as the recoverers of bodies. If a man is killed near the village of an enemy, an old woman from the slain man's village is permitted to recover his body.

Still, the women have one method by which they can exercise a measure of influence over village politics. All women fear being abducted by raiders and always leave the village with this anxiety at the back of their minds. Women always bring their

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

If such a duel is escalated, it usually develops into a side-slapping contest. Occasionally, the combatants will sue for the use of machetes and axes, but this is rare. If machetes are used, the object of the contest still remains the same: Injure your opponent seriously enough so that he will withdraw from the contest, but try not to draw blood. Hence, opponents strike each other with only the flat of the blade when they resort to machetes.

In some areas the Yąnomamö modify the chest-pounding duel in another way: The opponents hold rocks in their clenched fists and strike their adversaries on the chest with an even more stunning blow. They try not to let the stone itself touch the flesh of the man they are fighting. Even without the use of stones, however, they are able to deliver their blows with such force that some of the participants cough up blood for days after having been in a duel.

Club fights represent the next level of violence. These can take place both within and between villages. Most of the club fights result from arguments over women, but a few of them develop out of disputes associated with food theft. Dikawä, a young man about twenty years old, came home one day and discovered a bunch of eating bananas his father, about fifty-five years old, had hung up in his house, above his hearth, to ripen in the smoke. Dikawä, however, ate a number of them without his father's permission. When his father discovered the theft, he ripped a pole out of his house and began clubbing Dikawä. Dikawä armed himself with a similar club and attacked his father, precipitating a general melee that soon involved most of the men in the village, each taking the side of the father or son, as they saw fit. In brawls such as these, many individuals join in the fighting just to keep the sides even; if a group is badly outnumbered, they will be joined by friends whose sense of fairness stimulates them to take sides, no matter what the issue is. The net result of the above fight was a number of lacerated skulls, bashed fingers, and sore shoulders. The contestants try to hit each other on the top of the head, but when the fight gets out of hand, the participants swing wildly and rarely hit their opponents on the skull. More frequently, the blow lands on the shoulder or arm.

The clubs used in these fights are, ideally, 8 to 10 feet long. They are very wiry, quite heavy, and deliver a tremendous wallop. In general shape and dimensions, they resemble pool cues, but are nearly twice as long. The club is held at the thin end, which is frequently sharpened to a long point in case the fighting escalates to spear thrusting, in which case the club is inverted and used as a pike.

Most duels start between two men, usually after one of them has been caught *en flagrante* trysting with the other's wife. The enraged husband challenges his opponent to strike him on the head with a club. He holds his own club vertically, leans against it and exposes his head for his opponent to strike. After he has sustained a blow on the head, he can then deliver one on the culprit's skull. But as soon as blood starts to flow, almost everybody rips a pole out of the house frame and joins in the fighting, supporting one or the other of the contestants.

Needless to say, the tops of most men's heads are covered with long, ugly scars of which their bearers are immensely proud. Some of them, in fact, keep their head cleanly shaved on top to display these scars, rubbing red pigment on their bare scalps to define them more precisely. Viewed from the top, the skull of an accomplished man of forty years looks like a road map, for it is criss-crossed by as many as twenty large scars (see

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

164 302 Fig. 5–1). Others keep their heads shaved for decorative reasons only, irrespective of the number of scars they bear. Some do not shave their heads at all.

Club fighting is frequent in large villages, primarily because there are more opportunities for men to establish clandestine sexual liaisons without getting caught at it. Most affairs are, however, discovered. The larger the village, the more frequent the club fighting; and as fighting increases, so too does the probability that the village will fission and result in two separate groups. Most village fissioning I investigated resulted from a specific club fight over a woman, a fight that was merely one such incident in a whole series of similar squabbles.

The village of Patanowä-teri split during the last month of my first field trip. One of the young men took the wife of another because she was allegedly being mistreated by him. This resulted in a brutal club fight that involved almost every man in the village. The fight escalated to jabbing with the sharpened ends of the clubs when the husband of the woman in question was speared by his rival and wounded. The headman of the [622] village, a brother of Kąobawä, had been attempting to keep the fighting restricted to clubs. When the husband's rival speared his opponent, the headman went into a rage and speared him in turn, running his own sharpened club completely through the young man's body. He died when they tried to remove the weapon. The wife was then given [684] back to her legitimate husband, who punished her by cutting both her ears off with his machete.

[602] The kinsmen of the dead man were then ordered to leave the village before there * [628] was further bloodshed. The aggrieved faction joined the Monou-teri and the Bisaasi-teri [721] because these two groups were at war with their natal village, and they knew that they would have an opportunity to raid their own village to get revenge. The Monou-teri and the two Bisaasi-teri groups accepted these new arrivals; they were kinsmen and would actively prosecute the war against the Patanowä-teri. The hosts, of course, took several women from the refugees, the price a vulnerable group must pay for protection.

578 411 Spears are not commonly used by the Yąnamanö. A rare form of fighting, however, does involve the use of these weapons. It is a formal contest in the sense that the fight is prearranged and the participants agree beforehand to refrain from using their bows and arrows. Fights such as these take place when the members of two villages are not angry enough with each other to shoot to kill, but are too furious to be able to satisfy their grudges with chest pounding or club fighting.

411 531 The spears themselves are about 6 feet long, lightweight, and frequently painted with red and black designs. They are merely peeled saplings sharpened to a long point at the heavy end. Each man makes several of them.

*628 578 721 593 The single spear-throwing incident that took place during my fieldwork started over a woman. Her husband had been very cruel to her, so the woman's brother, the headman of one of the villages north of Kąobawä's area, took her away from him by force. This enraged his entire following, which was considerably smaller than that of the wife's brother. A club fight temporarily settled the dispute, but the smaller of the groups was thoroughly trounced by the followers of the wife's brother. They challenged their adversaries to a spear fight and notified them they were going to return with reinforcements.

The woman over which the dispute began then ran away from her brother and rejoined her husband. But the die was cast and the fight was now a matter of pride, the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 122]

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

him that it was used by people of my "group" when they went on raids against their enemies, his interest shifted to our military exploits.

"Who did you raid?" he asked.

"Germany-teri."

"Did you go on the raid?"

"No, but my father did."

"How many of the enemy did he kill?"

"None."

"Did any of your kinsmen get killed by the enemy?"

"No."

"You probably raided because of woman theft, didn't you?"

"No."

At this answer he was visibly disturbed. He chatted for a moment with the others, seeming to doubt my answer.

"Was it because of witchcraft?" he then asked.

"No," I replied again.

"Ah! Someone stole cultivated food from the other!" he exclaimed, citing confidently the only other incident that is deemed serious enough to provoke man to wage war.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate Yąnomamö warfare, its causes, and the techniques of raid is to give a history of the recent military activities of Monou-teri, a small village that split away from Kąobawä's group in the mid-1950s.

A Specific War

The headman of the village, whom I shall call Damowä (since he was recently killed by raiders), was a particularly aggressive man. According to Rerebawä, Damowä was the only fierce man in the entire village, the true *waiteri* (fierce one) of the group.

Damowä had a habit of seducing the wives of other men, a factor that led to frequent feuding in the village and resulted in a number of club fights. Of the numerous affairs he had, two in particular illustrate the nature of possible consequences. His youngest brother was married to an abducted Shamatari girl. Damowä seduced her, thereby enraging his brother. The young man was afraid to vent his anger on the real culprit, his brother, so, instead, he shot his wife with an arrow. He intended only to wound her, but the arrow struck her in a vital spot and she died.

Manasinawä, a man of some fifty-five years at the present time, joined Damowä's group with his wife and young daughter. He fled from his own village in order to take refuge in a group that was raiding his own village, as he wanted to get revenge against them for a wrong they had committed. Damowä, who already had several wives, decided to take Manasinawä's wife from him and add her to his own family. This resulted in the final club fight that led to the separation of Kąobawä's group from the Monou-teri. Manasinawä's wife took the daughter and fled to yet another village. Kąobawä then organized a raid to recover the woman and child when their protectors refused to give them back. The two were taken by force from this group by Kąobawä's raiders. Nobody